

# Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary

## Overview

The quality of life in Fairfax County is significantly enhanced by the high caliber of its parks and libraries as well as recreational opportunities. From libraries to beautiful parks, RECenters and community centers, Fairfax County provides many opportunities to learn, have fun and relax. The formal beginning of the Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) can be traced to the appropriation of \$250 by the Board of Supervisors in 1939 to establish a free countywide system, while for more than 50 years, the Fairfax County Park Authority (FCPA) has been protecting and preserving precious natural resources, ensuring that everyone will be able to appreciate and enjoy them. In addition to the major parks, there are also nature centers, historic sites and golf courses to explore and experience. Likewise, for over 40 years, the Department of Community and Recreation Services (CRS) has offered a variety of recreational opportunities for all ages through its community centers, teen centers, senior centers, and recreation programs for individuals with disabilities.

The three agencies in this program area are regularly recognized for high achievement in their respective fields. An indication of the quality of these programs is that the National Sporting Goods Association's Sports Foundation named the FCPA its 2002 National Gold Medal Award winner. The award is presented annually in cooperation with the National Recreation and Park Association to communities throughout the United States for excellence in park and recreation administration, and represents the highest honor in this field. FCPL is the largest public library in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, as well as the largest in Virginia and was recently cited by a report in the American Libraries Journal as one of the top 10 libraries of its size in the U.S. Its director currently serves as the President of the Virginia Library Association. In 2003, the National Association of Counties (NACo) recognized the Department of Community and Recreation Services' Therapeutic Recreation Services Program with an "Acts of Caring" award.

## Strategic Direction

As part of the countywide focus on developing strategic plans during 2002-2003, FCPA, CRS and FCPL have each developed mission, vision and values statements; performed environmental scans; and defined strategies for achieving their missions. These strategic plans are linked to the overall County Core Purpose and Vision Elements. Common themes in all three of the agencies in the Parks, Recreation and Cultural program area include:

- Accessibility
- Diversity
- Inclusiveness of all segments of the community
- Professional growth and staff development
- Lifelong learning
- Leisure opportunities
- Technology
- Partnerships and community involvement
- Stewardship of resources

### COUNTY CORE PURPOSE

*To protect and enrich the quality of life for the people, neighborhoods, and diverse communities of Fairfax County by:*

- Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities
- Building Livable Spaces
- Practicing Environmental Stewardship
- Connecting People and Places
- Creating a Culture of Engagement
- Maintaining Healthy Economies
- Exercising Corporate Stewardship

In recognition that government cannot meet all the needs in this program area, there is a strong emphasis on community-building and leveraging community, business and County resources to provide the services and programs that residents want. Each of the three agencies relies extensively on volunteers to achieve its mission. Changing demographics are affecting all three and their strategic plans are designed to address these conditions. More on each one's strategic focus can be found in the individual agency narratives that follow.

# Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary

## Linkage to County Vision Elements

While this program area supports all seven of the County Vision Elements, the following are especially emphasized:

- Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities
- Connecting People and Places
- Building Livable Communities
- Creating a Culture of Engagement

Common themes to address for the **Maintaining Safe and Caring Communities** vision element include programs targeted toward youth, particularly those at risk, as well as the senior population. CRS is continuing to implement its Teen Center redesign to better serve youth and is also providing ongoing support for an at-risk youth mentoring program. In addition, the FCPA partnered with several other County agencies including the FCPL, CRS and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board's Alcohol and Drug Services to incorporate elements of the Countywide "Character Counts" program into weekly themes of the summer RecPAC program. The FCPA has also identified as one of its strategic priorities to enhance the delivery of fitness programs and services to help County residents improve their individual fitness levels, while CRS also provides health risk awareness programs including events to inform youth about the risks of smoking. CRS also continued to expand the Senior+ program to provide therapeutic recreation, mental health and nursing support for seniors with physical and mental health needs at senior centers. One of the FCPL's contributions to a healthier County population was its partnership with INOVA Hospital to present puppet shows that encourage families to have their children immunized. As part of its outreach to these targeted groups, the FCPA developed and delivered a water safety program to high school students and has plans to expand it to middle school students.

A number of creative initiatives are taking place in this program area to foster the **Connecting People and Places** vision element. Many involve computer and Internet access. CRS initiatives include partnering with the Fairfax County Library Foundation to receive a U.S. Department of Education grant to improve student achievement through the start-up and operation of three additional computer clubhouses – one each at the Reston Teen Center, the James Lee Community Center and the Mott Community Center. CRS also partnered with the Northern Virginia Technology Council to open a new computer clubhouse at the Willston Multicultural Center and plans to provide Internet access at 100 percent of community, senior and teen centers to ensure public computer access for County residents of all ages and abilities in FY 2005. The FCPA has made similar strides in connecting people by expanding its online historic and cultural resources, as well as its e-mail subscriber service for greater communication with residents who have natural and cultural resource interests. The FCPA will also continue to improve citizens' access to all parts of the County by expanding the Cross County Trail, while the FCPL will take its programs to children in the Route 1 corridor who cannot physically get to a library.

The County's vision element for **Building Livable Spaces** will be addressed within this program area by efforts to enhance and expand use of resources for recreational and learning activities including opening the Burke Lake mini-golf course and expanding the Lorton Senior Center in FY 2004, as well as plans to open the Laurel Hill Golf Course and the Cub Run RECenter in FY 2005, and continuing planning for the construction of two new libraries and renovation of five others. In each of these efforts, the community benefits from expanded facilities to accommodate increased demands for programs and services.

The three agencies in this program area will also play a critical role in **Creating a Culture of Engagement**. Each seeks to engage citizens as volunteers and stakeholders, as well as expand partnerships with the community in order to address the growing service demands resulting from an increased population. CRS will continue to implement its "Friends of Senior Centers" Council that will provide valuable strategic direction as well as serve as a community-based partner for alternative funding sources. CRS will also expand its use of community facilities such as churches, office buildings and community rooms to provide satellite activities and programs in areas with the greatest need. As another means of maximizing limited resources, the FCPA will continue to work extensively with citizen groups, other County agencies, FCPS and public/private partnerships to get critical input to plan Laurel Hill Park as well as improve athletic field availability countywide. Fairfax County's highly educated population is an especially rich source of highly qualified

## Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary

volunteers, many of whom are looking to give something back to the community. The FCPL specifically seeks to attract an increasing number of Library volunteers with a Master's degree in Library Science. The public benefits extensively from these efforts to provide a high level of service very cost-effectively.

### Program Area Summary by Character

Category	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2004 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years					
Regular	940/ 895	935/ 888	940/ 893.5	948/ 901.5	945/ 898.5
Exempt	3/ 3	3/ 3	1/ 1	1/ 1	1/ 1
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$43,302,190	\$46,890,660	\$46,356,772	\$49,709,614	\$49,574,104
Operating Expenses	28,887,864	26,202,263	26,634,033	26,710,998	26,743,998
Capital Equipment	557,697	486,200	725,488	240,000	240,000
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>\$72,747,751</b>	<b>\$73,579,123</b>	<b>\$73,716,293</b>	<b>\$76,660,612</b>	<b>\$76,558,102</b>
Less:					
Recovered Costs	(\$8,339,434)	(\$13,128,600)	(\$12,239,600)	(\$13,128,326)	(\$13,128,326)
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$64,408,317</b>	<b>\$60,450,523</b>	<b>\$61,476,693</b>	<b>\$63,532,286</b>	<b>\$63,429,776</b>
<b>Income</b>	<b>\$6,355,501</b>	<b>\$7,069,342</b>	<b>\$6,704,435</b>	<b>\$8,447,712</b>	<b>\$8,447,712</b>
<b>Net Cost to the County</b>	<b>\$58,052,816</b>	<b>\$53,381,181</b>	<b>\$54,772,258</b>	<b>\$55,084,574</b>	<b>\$54,982,064</b>

### Program Area Summary by Agency

Category	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2004 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan
Department of Community and Recreation Services	\$12,820,621	\$11,158,660	\$11,787,676	\$12,371,197	\$12,366,215
Fairfax County Park Authority	24,245,404	22,077,998	22,206,418	23,238,642	23,141,114
Fairfax County Public Library	27,342,292	27,213,865	27,482,599	27,922,447	27,922,447
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>\$64,408,317</b>	<b>\$60,450,523</b>	<b>\$61,476,693</b>	<b>\$63,532,286</b>	<b>\$63,429,776</b>

### Budget Trends

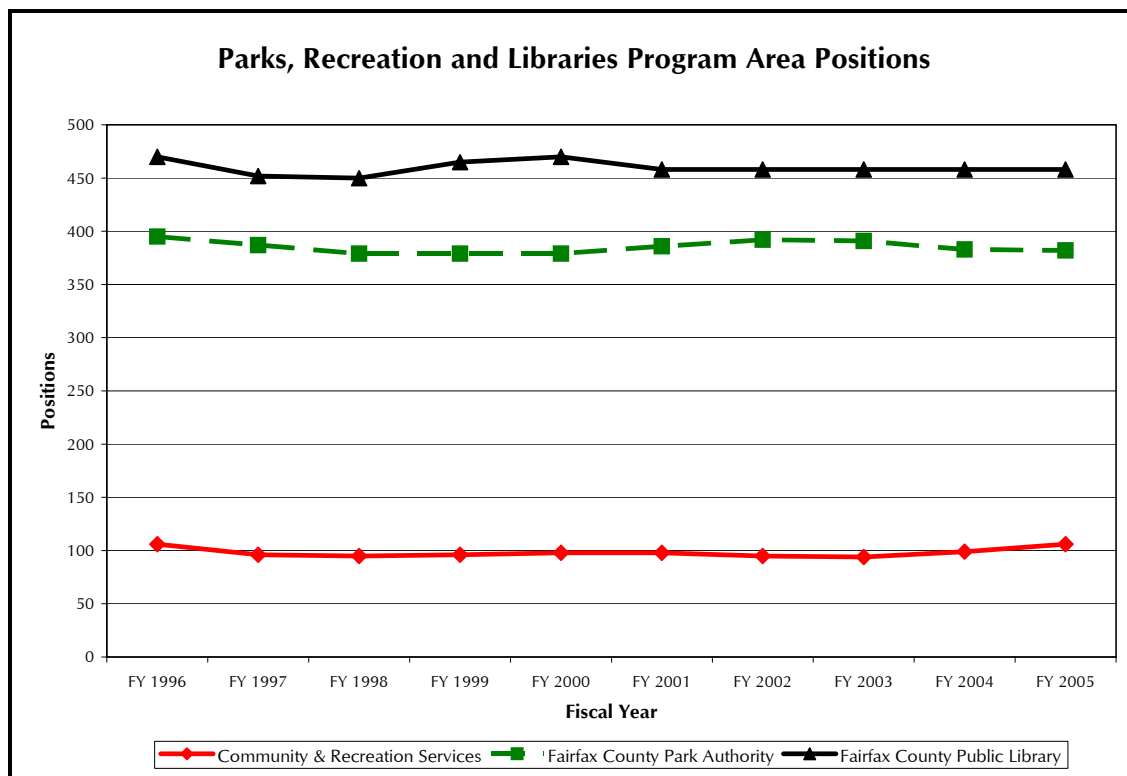
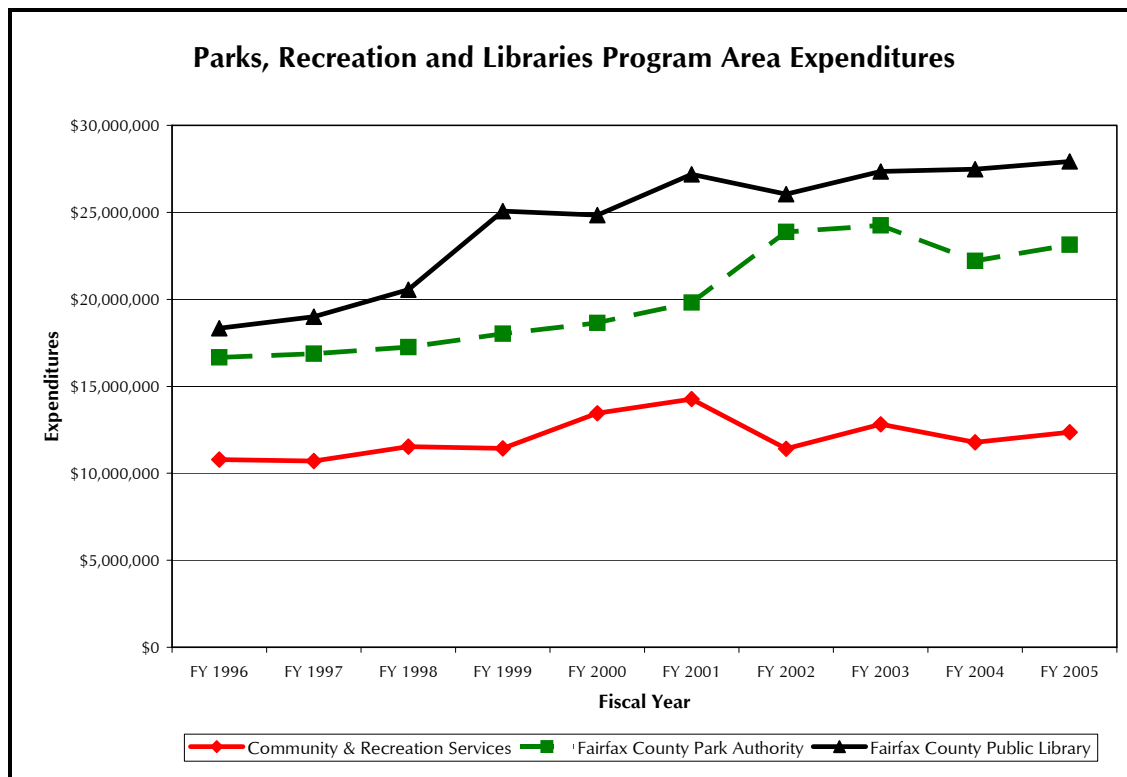
For FY 2005, the recommended funding level of \$63,429,776 for the Parks, Recreation and Libraries program area comprises 6.3 percent of the total recommended General Fund direct expenditures of \$1,003,824,621. It also includes 946 or 8.2 percent of total authorized positions for FY 2005.

During the period FY 2003-FY 2005, the real estate tax rate was reduced from \$1.23 to \$1.13 per \$100 assessed value. As a result, reductions from anticipated spending levels were made in many County agencies to offset the loss in projected revenue. In most County agencies, expenditures have still increased during this period to account for ongoing operational requirements; however, overall General Fund direct expenditures have been reduced by \$63,721,248 and overall County disbursements have been reduced by \$113,513,736 as a result of the real estate tax rate reductions.

This program area has experienced budget reductions totaling \$7,700,787 or 12.1 percent of General Fund direct expenditure reductions to date. Since FY 2002, the Library's funding for new materials has been reduced by 31 percent. This is the equivalent of an entire community library collection. In addition, a total of 18 positions have been abolished as part of those reductions. This represents 10.5 percent of General Fund positions eliminated to date.

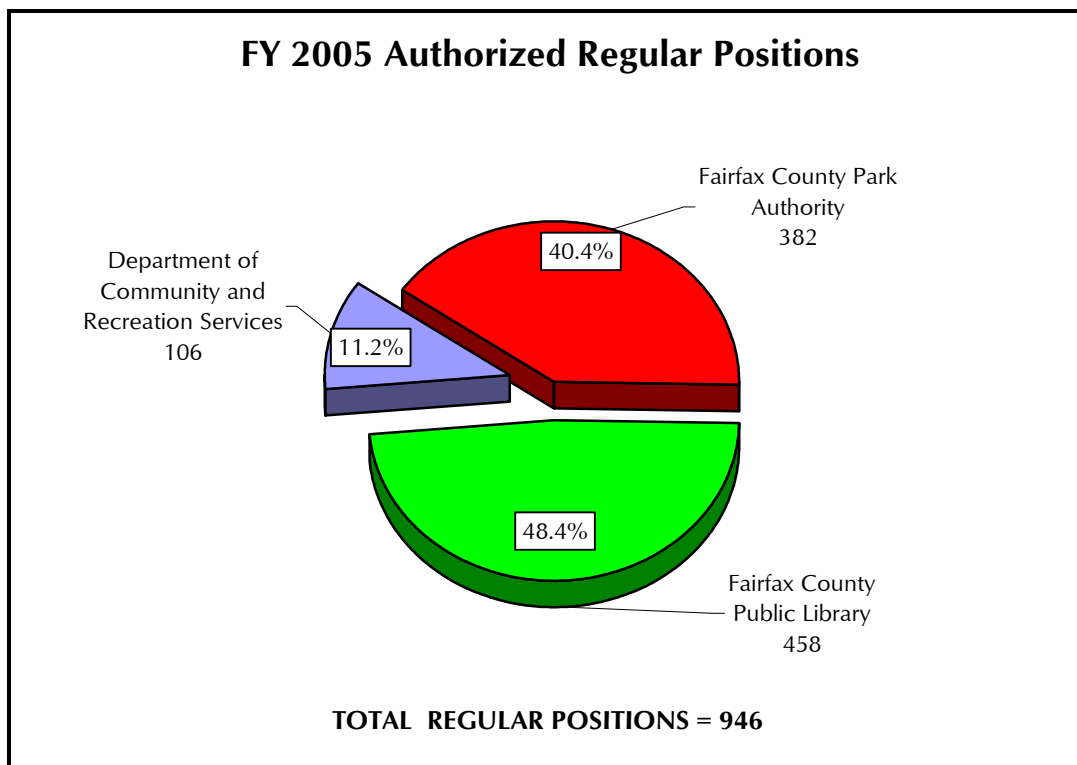
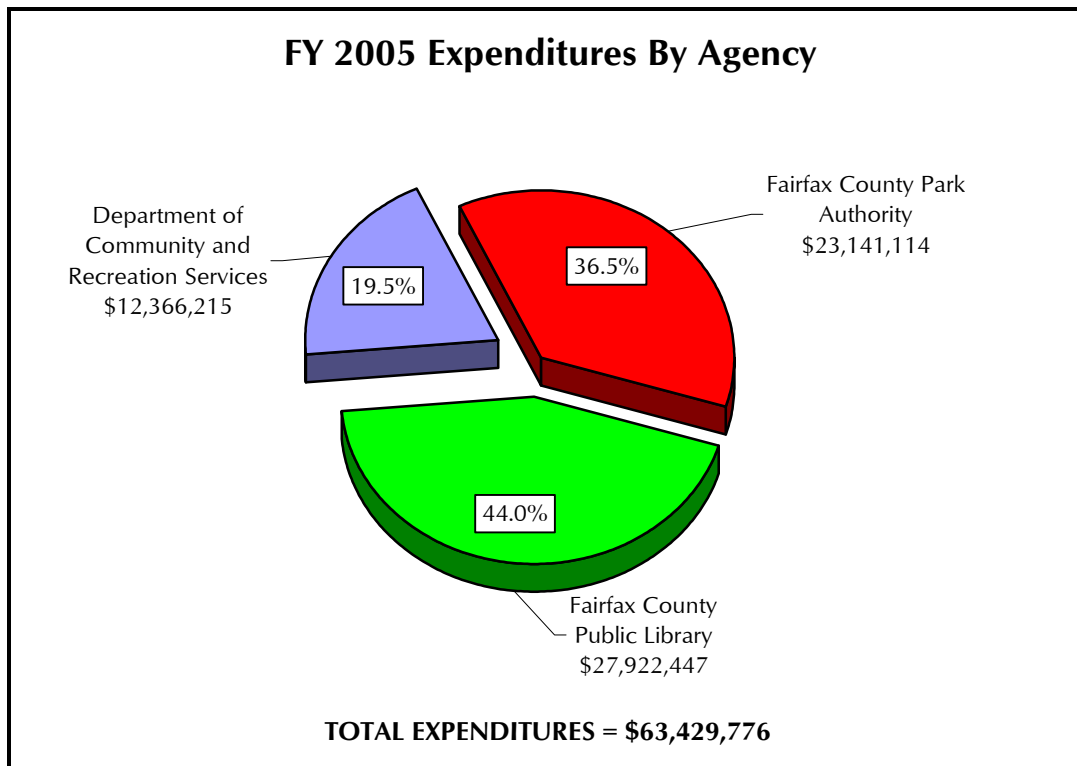
# Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary

## Trends in Expenditures and Positions



## Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary

### FY 2005 Expenditures and Positions by Agency



# Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary

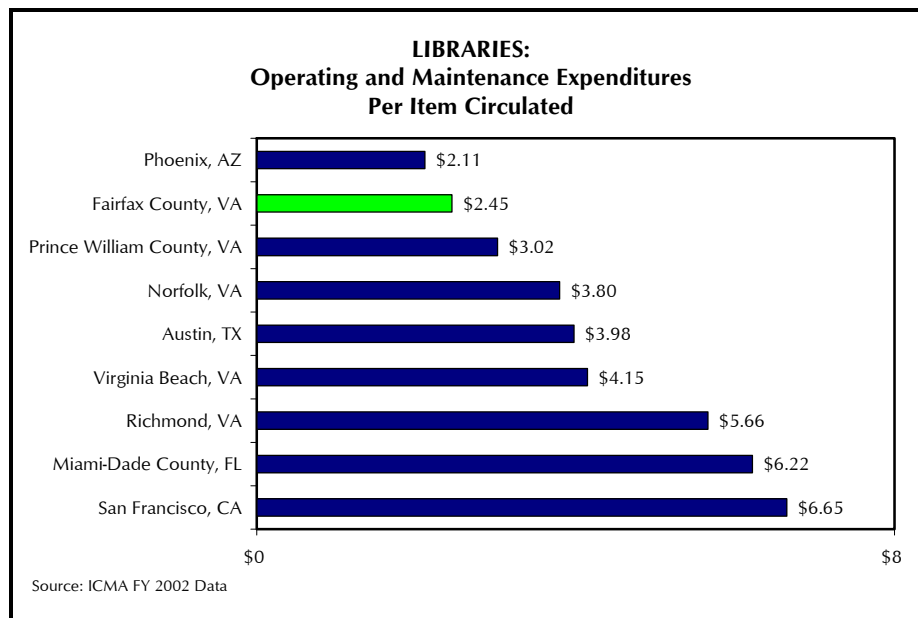
## Benchmarking

Fairfax County has participated in the International City/County Management Association's (ICMA) benchmarking effort since 2000. Over 130 cities and counties provide comparable data annually in a number of service areas. Not all jurisdictions provide data for every service area, however. Parks, Recreation and Libraries are some of the benchmarked service areas for which Fairfax County provides data. In addition, more performance measurement data are presented within each of these agencies' budget narratives.

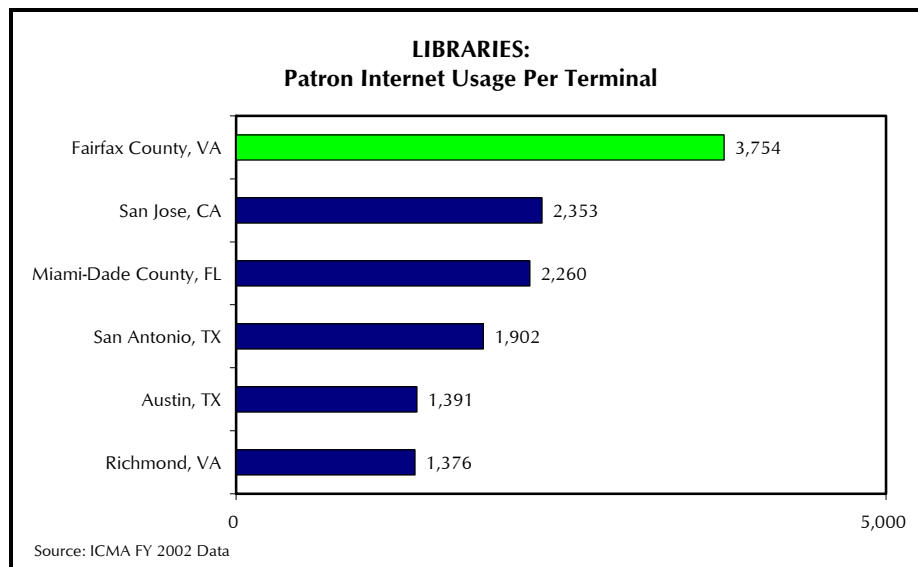
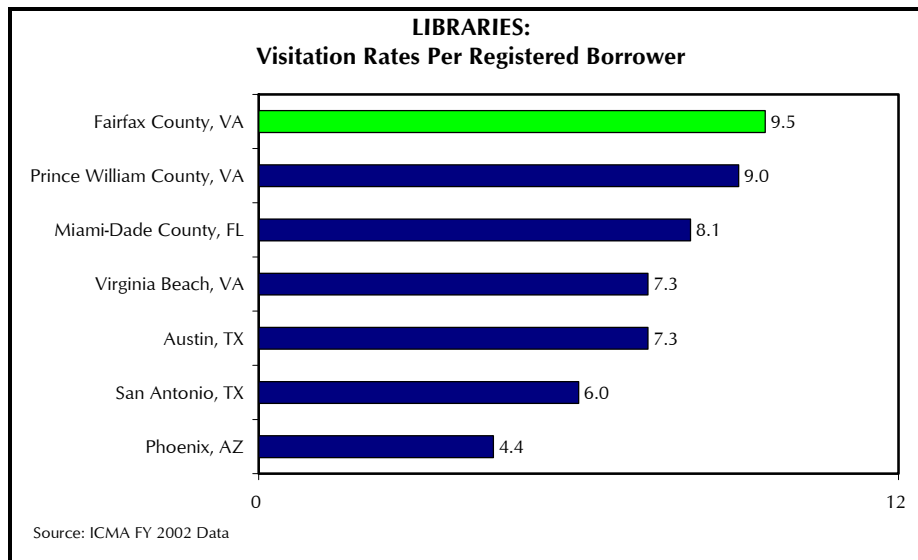
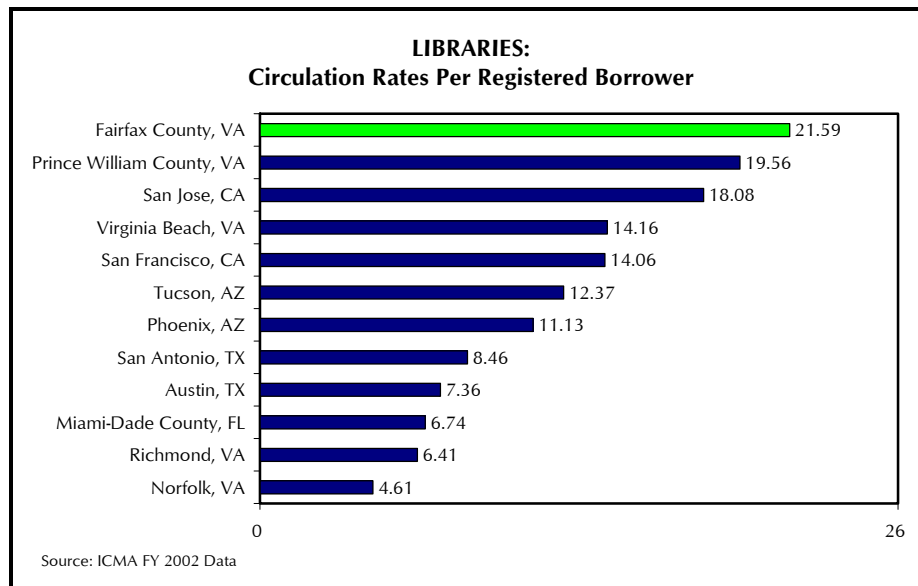
Participating local governments (cities, counties and towns) provide data on standard templates provided by ICMA in order to ensure consistency. ICMA then performs extensive data cleaning to ensure the greatest accuracy and comparability of data. As a result of the time to collect the data and undergo ICMA's rigorous data cleaning processes, information is always available with a one-year delay. FY 2002 data represent the latest available information. The jurisdictions presented in the graphs below generally show how Fairfax County compares to other large jurisdictions (population over 500,000). In cases where other Virginia localities provided data, they are shown as well.

An important point to note in an effort such as this is that since participation is voluntary, the jurisdictions that provide data have shown they are committed to becoming/remaining high performance organizations. Therefore, comparisons made through this program should be considered in the context that the participants have self-selected and are inclined to be among the higher performers than a random sample among local governments nationwide. It is also important to note that not all jurisdictions respond to all questions. In some cases, the question or process is not applicable to a particular locality or data are not available. For those reasons, the universe of jurisdictions with which Fairfax County is compared is not always the same for each benchmark.

As can be seen from the following, Fairfax County ranks favorably compared to other large jurisdictions and other Virginia localities. It should be noted that because the data shown are for FY 2002, they represent the very beginning of the most recent four-year budget reduction cycle (FY 2002, FY 2003, FY 2004 and FY 2005). Future benchmarking data are anticipated to reflect the cumulative effects of the reductions taken by each of these agencies.



# Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary



# Parks, Recreation and Libraries Program Area Summary

